SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE PAPER DELIVERED UNTO THE Sheriffs of LONDON, BY JAMES HOLLOWAY At the time of his EXECUTION.

Entred according to ORDER.

IT cannot be otherwiſe than matter of aſtoniſhment to all Loyal and Ingenuous Men, to behold the unquiet and reſtleſs Principles of too many amongſt us, who think it not enough to broach and ſpread about their Doctrines of diſobedience, but alſo to endeavour to debauch the Palates and Underſtanding of their Pupils, ſo that the Poyſon they deliver may be eſteemed as the wholſomeſt Food they receive; of ſuch Men, and ſuch Principles, we have lately met remarkable inſtances: A Horrid Conſpiracy hath been a foot, a Conſpiracy to ruine the Goverment we live under, to deſtroy the beſt of Kings, and the beſt of Religions, and this apparently proved by ſuch pregnant Teſtimonies, that Infidelity it ſelf might have been ſilenced. The Judgment of God hath overtaken many of the Conſpirators, and juſtly have they ſuffered for the ſame; yet hath the Impudence of thoſe men been ſo extravagant, that they have, and do endeavour to Ridicule and Sham the ſame, and in plain words tell the World, (a) *The Plot is loſt here except you find it in the Country amongſt the Abhorrers and Addreſſers.* It will not therefore be amiſs if we examine the Confeſſion of the laſt Sufferer, who, at the brink of death, when his Soul was ready to launch forth into the Ocean of Eternity, and the proſpect of Judgment and Immortality was before him, freely and voluntarily aſſerted his knowledge of thoſe Crimes he came to ſuffer for: And tho' we needed nothing of this nature to corroborate the other proofs thereof, yet as the ſame were the words of a dying Man, they may prevail on the miſled and ignorant, to take off that prejudice they have too long lain under; and ſatisfy the whole world, that thoſe who pretend the greateſt Innocency, and deceive mankind with their falſe and ſpecious pretences of aſſerting the Liberties and Properties of the People, are the very men, that in the ſame breath, at the ſame time intended the greateſt Invaſions thereupon.

In order to which examination, I ſhall only take to pieces that Paper Mr. *Holloway* delivered at the time of his Death to our preſent Sheriffs; wherein he begins:

To ſtop the Mouths, &c. of all Pamphleteers and News-Scriblers, who have done more prejudice to His Majeſty and Kingdoms by their impudent endeavours to Sham all Plots, and to fill the Country with falſe news than they will be ever able to retrieve and to ſatisfie: all I leave behind me, I thought good to draw up a ſhort account of what I knew of the late Proteſtant-Plot, &c.

Herein the Reader may obſerve a plain Confeſſion of the Plot in groſs, the *Proteſtant-Plot* as the Sufferer termed it, and his Reaſon for publiſhing what he knew thereof, To ſtop the mouths of ſuch virulent and impudent Scriblers who endeavour to Sham the ſame, and put a falſe gloſs upon ſuch black and Tremendous Actions; nor is he

(a) Sir S. *Barnardiſtones* Letters in his Tryal.

he at all out in his opinion, that ſuch as theſe do a greater injury to the King and Kingdom than they are or can be in any Capacity to retrieve; for if we conſider how great a Providence was ſeen in the diſcovery of the Nations worſt and moſt implacable enemies in the midſt of their horrid and abominable Contrivances, all endeavours to ſtifle the ſame muſt needs be Impious in the higheſt degree, for hereby the Government is ſlaundered as unjuſt and cruel for ſhedding the blood of ſuch who have lawfully ſuffered in the ſame; Rebellion is covered with the name of Innocence; the ſentence of the Law duely executed is called Murder; Vice wears the mask of Vertue: The Wolf is got into Sheeps cloathing, and none can diſcern his Enemy in the diſguiſe of Friendſhip; tho' the Pit be dug to betray us, we are led on in a pleaſant and enticing Path, without fear or apprehenſion of our danger, till the moment of our Ruine confronts our Preſumption. But farther proceeds the Sufferer, to the particulars of his concern in the ſaid Plot, wherein he aſcribes his firſt knowledge thereof to his Publick Spirit, which led him to attend Affairs beyond that capacity wherein he had been bred, in the following of Parliaments for the perfecting ſome deſigns on foot in order to the improvement of the Linnen Manufacture, &c. In which I would obſerve, That men, when they leave the Calling that Providence hath allotted them, and would ſoar into a ſphere above them, they very rarely miſs the fate of *Dedalus*, their Molten Wings deceive them, and their fall too late gives them notice of their ruine. And here adds he in this Attendance upon that Parliament, *The more I knew, the more I was deſirous to know, and did by ſome Scriblers and News-mongers conſtantly know moſt of the publick affairs that were acted, which they undertook to repreſent according to their own humour; many Actions being repreſented very Illegal, much againſt the Proteſtant intereſt in favour of Papiſts,* &c. *Shamming the Popiſh Plot upon the Proteſtants, abuſing the Rights and Priviledges of the Subjects, the truth of which I leave to the judgement of all; but hearing many ſuch-like things, was eaſily prevailed with to be concerned in the Plot, according as it was propoſed to me,* &c.

When the Devil hath a work to do, he uſually Employs ſuch Agents as may beſt deceive the Incautelous, and accordingly ſo diſguiſes them, and puts ſuch Words into their Mouths, that you would take them rather for Angels of Light, than Miniſters of the Infernal Lord. The Lying Prophets came in the name of God with as much Zeal in their mouths, and appearing Truth, as thoſe by God himſelf appointed; nor in like manner was the late faction any thing cautious of cloaking their pretences in the Livery of Heaven, Zeal was in their mouth, and Treaſon in their hearts; Property and Liberty was their cry, Slavery and Bondage their deſign; True Proteſtant Reformation their pretence, Hereſy and Schiſme, the Deſtruction and Ruine of the Eſtabliſhed Religion and Government their laſt aim; and in ſhort, knowing they could never perpetrate their bloody and worſe than ſavage intetions, if the ſame were brought in naked, they Cloathed their Deformities in a Presbiterian Jump, and made Religion the Pander to uſher in the Cheat. But further he goes on, *About* July 1682. *I met* (ſays he) *a perſon who gave me an account touching the Election of Sheriffs of* London, &c. *and the Illegality thereof, ashe repreſented the ſame; whereupon the Proteſtant Gentry were reſolved to remedy what was deſigned, by an Inſurrection in ſeveral parts of the Kingdom; and, if poſſible, to get the King off from his Evil Councellors,* &c. *That it ſhould begin at* London, Briſtol, Exeter, Taunton, Cheſter, York, New-Caſtle, *and therefore deſired we might conſider how it might be managed in* Briſtol, *which they did, and concluded, that* Briſtol *with about Three hundred and fifty men might be eaſily ſurpriſed,* &c.

In April, ſays he, *I heard of another deſign againſt the King and Duke of* York, *as they were to come from* New-market, &c. *When I heard it, I declared my abhorrance of any ſuch thing, I was confident none in our parts would be for it.*

Here he confeſſes he did know of this deſign, and tho' he would be thought ingenuous, in his abhorrence thereof, yet too much of the Phanatical Leven poſſeſſed him, Why did he not reveal it? Can that man be ſaid to abhor a Crime, that when the ſame is diſcovered to him conceals it, and Cloſſets it in his breaſt till the ſame is perpetrated on his Neighbour? much more in this caſe, the Life of His Moſt Sacred Majeſty and that of his Royal Brother were deſigned, the very Arms bought and ready that were to effect the ſame; the men, the manner, the place, and every circumſtance agreed on the Helliſh wickedneſs in proſpect of performance; the performance ſo execrable in it ſelf, that words are not ſignificant enough to expreſs the horror of it, nor Imagination comprehenſive to fathom its guilt; and yet to cover this, to lodge it quietly in his breaſt, and yet own, or brag of his abhorrance of it, is Hypocriſy againſt the Devil, and can admit of no excuſe. But further he ſays.

The general Deſign for the Inſurrection was carried on by others, who tho' they made a great ſtir in the Nation, trying the Inclinations of people, and had treated with the Scots *and* Iriſh *as I heard, who were to be ready at the ſame time, yet never came to any reſolution as to any time or Method before all was diſcovered, tho' they had been Eleven Months contriving it from the time I firſt heard it. This I hope will be enough to ſatisfie all people there was a PLOT.*

Had we had no other Proof, ſurely this muſt, beyond all doubt, ſatisfy the whole World of the truth of theſe Deſigns; yet can I not but obſerve how nearly the ſame agrees with every part of that Evidence that hath been before given in at the Tryals of ſuch who have deſervedly ſuffered Death for the ſame, the like previous complaints you were by them acquainted with, the Magiſtracy illegally choſen, Popiſh Councels and Miniſters about the King, Arbitrary Government coming upon us, Property and Liberty invaded, Shamming the Popiſh Plot, &c. And there-

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fore upon these grounds (say they) the Rebellion was intended, and the Death of the King and His Royal Highness designed, and all this and you see is but a counterpart of this Gentlemans last words; so that though all good Men never doubted the veracity hereof before, yet now certainly the worst can never have Impudence enough to go about to evade it. When the late *Jesuits* who were executed in the Popish-Plot deny'd their concern therein, and in the words of Dying Men asserted their Innocency, it was objected against them, that the Religion they had Imbibed allowed them for the good of that Church (whereof they were Members) to disown what the came to suffer for: I shall not dispute the Validity or truth of the Charge, but sure I am, amongst Protestants, There is no such tenent, to allow men in their last hours to speak what is false on any pretence whatsoever, much less to give them liberty to charge themselves and others with what they never did or were guilty of.

But to proceed, this Gentleman goes on, *The Arguments* (says he) *before-mentioned, with many others to the same Effect, not only soon prevailed with me, but made me indeed think it my duty to do what I could for my King and Countries safety, being then fully perswaded, that not only Popery, but Arbitrary Government was intended; not then considering, (as I have since considered) how much Bloodshed it might have caused in the Nation; for then I thought all would have been ended in a little time, supposing things to be as to me was reported: But I now declare my Hearty Sorrow for my yielding thereto, and acting therein; (this I can safely say, I was not for taking away the Kings Life, but wholly for his Preservation) yet am satisfied that it might have caused very much Bloodshed in the Nation, and am glad it did not take Effect. And am satisfied it was a great Sin against God,* &c.

What this Gentleman gives to palliate his offence, and make that a Duty as he calls it, which was his Crime, is so far from giving any Colour thereunto, that let any sober man observe it, and he will conclude it rather a Sophestical aggravation thereof. *I thought it my duty,* says he, *to do what I could for my King and Countrys safety.* A specious pretence, but pray mark him, an Insurrection was to be made, the Peace we had so long enjoyed, and was then likely to enjoy could they have been quiet, was intended to be disturbed. We neither heard of Warrs nor Rumours of Warrs, but from themselves; the King was to have been seized, his Friends taken from him under the Title of *Evil Councellors*, and yet this Consistent with the King and Kingdoms safety, nay, the Life of his Sacred Majesty was threatned, his Royal Brother to share the like Fate, and this known (as above) to the Prisoner, and all the while he and his Brother Phanaticks doing their Duty for their King and their Country. Oh! but *Popery and Arbitrary Government was intended.* I know not in case of their designs going forward, what security we should have had against Popery, tho' I am apt to believe it had been the greatest help to the introduction of it, under the Common disturbances that would have ensued, that they themselves could have wish'd for; as for the Latter, I may be more certain, that nothing could have possibly followed the same, if ever they had prevailed, but the most Tyrannical and slavish Government in the World; for that Kingdom whose Foundation is in Blood, must have its Superstructure in Slaughter; and nothing but Devastation and Ruine of the best, at the will and pleasure of the worst, can ever be expected therein. An Instance whereof too many of us too fatally remember in the late Usurpers days, our Channels were filled at the Expence of our Decaest and most Loyal Veins; the Scaffolds, besides that of the best of Kings, was almost every Month stain'd with some or other of our Nobles Blood; our Estates at the Mercy of a Tyrant, who thought it crime enough for any man to think him so; and as if he could have seen into their Breast, though their Lips ne're uttered the same, that or their Lives were the Price of their inexpressed Loyalty: and this is all good men might behold, as the end of the said Designs of our late Plotters, had the same taken effect; and which is the next words, our sufferer takes notice of, *not considering then how much Blood,* &c. But this he confesses brought him to a sorrow for his Intentions, and he owns it before all the world; *That he then was glad it did not take Effect,* and owns it as a Sin against God Almighty, *not only in destrusting his Providence, but taking his Work out of his Hands*; and certainly, if we consider that God hath placed our great Magistrate over us to be obey'd, and hath left himself only his Superiour to call him to account for his actions in the Throne he hath Seated him; each irreverent word, or disobedient thought to this his Substitute on Earth, is a Crime against Heaven, how much more then would it be, to strive with these Saints, these Protestants, Reformers, and true Christians, though indeed the worst of Rebels, to dethrone him. Could they plead in excuse, that as he is the best of Kings, he was the worst of Tyrants; as he is the most merciful amongst all the Princes in the World, he was the most Savage and cruel; as he rules and governs in the highest and exactest Justice, distributing to every man his right, the Sword was his only Arbiter; and the Portion of every mans Inheritance, the right of his pleasure; yet these were not enough to Justify a Rebellion, to such a Prince we are bound by all Laws Humane and Divine to submit. But happy is it for us, we have as much reason to obey him for his goodness, as we are bound to do the same in Duty; and may all those that think otherwise, meet a reward for their Crimes, proportionable to the same. But our Sufferer, after his Confession aforesaid, comes and tells you, *that he was not, nor would be compelled to say what he did, but that it was his Resolution to declare all he knew concerning the Plot, and also to do what in him lay to prevent all Plottings for the Future, and to put an end to the Heats,* &c. and afterwards says, *when I gave in*

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my Confeſſion, I ſtood not upon terms of a Pardon, being confident if Truth will merit Mercy from the King, I ſhould have his Pardon, and that it was the only way to gain Mercy with God. And afterwards, *I Repent not my Confeſſion, and could I diſcover more, I would do it willingly, though I find not Mercy with Man.* So that upon the whole, here is a Ingenious Confeſſion of the ſaid Phanatical Plot, and a proofe againſt all the Cavils of the worſt of men, that the ſame was not a ſlight and ill grounded deſign, but laid deep, and intended againſt the bottom of the Government, againſt the life of the beſt of Kings and Brothers, and in ſhort againſt Monarch and Monarchy it ſelf, whom God grant long Preſervation unto.

FINIS.

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